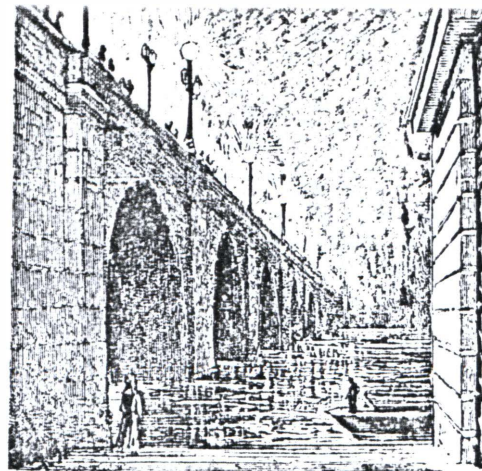


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Street Lamp Interference Data Exchange

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S L I D I N G S number 1 : February 1990

This is the first issue of SLIDINGS, the bulletin of SLIDE, and it doesn't pretend to be anything more than some preliminary thoughts and observations. Hopefully, as we put together such bits and pieces, more formal lines of direction may suggest themselves, patterns will emerge, ideas will be generated - who knows where it may lead ?

What would really be a mistake would be for us to impose any kind of direction or patterns ahead of gathering the data. Equally, it would be a mistake to impose any kind of filter on the data itself : at this stage, we should note anything and everything that could conceivably have a bearing on the phenomenon.

So without further preamble, here is some of the input that has come in so far....

Spontaneous or deliberate ?

Most of those who report SLIDE effects reckon they can't do it to order ; but this is not universally the case. Syd Ellis of Hickory, North Carolina, who describes herself as 'a test technician in a security systems plant and a mother/homemaker/ wife', tells us :

I moved to Western North Carolina to research and observe the Brown Mountain Lights in September of 1980. One night, while returning from my observation point, a mercury vapor street light went out as I passed it. It has been SLI since then, regardless of whether I am alone, with others, walking, or driving.

Usually, the lights go off by themselves, but occasionally I'll look at one, try to make it go out, and it does. The lights were always on when I passed them the next day.

The emotional element

There seems to be general agreement that one's emotional state is a crucial factor. A Belgian informant told me he could 'do' SLI only when he was emotionally aroused. Syd Ellis goes on to say :

This phenomenon has decreased as of late ; but I notice, when I get aggravated, fluorescent lights go out over my head, or over the heads of those with whom I am upset. SLI mostly happens when I am elated, but being upset causes it as well.

Dr George Egely, of Budapest, Hungary, on the other hand, relates it to mental concentration :

From 1976 to 1979 I lived in a rented apartment not far from the physics research lab where I worked. Usually I walked home quite late in the evening, and kept on thinking of my computational problems in fluid mechanics. During these evening walks I had to walk along a number of mercury lamps which were switched on at this time. I noticed that about twenty times the lamps went out when I walked under them. The lamps stayed off for the whole night, but next day they operated perfectly again. The lamps were not always the same ones, and these events were repeated with different lamps on other streets as well.

The conditions under which these events took place were always the same : I was concentrating with maximum efforts on my problem, ignoring the outside world completely. At this time I had a mild, sometimes sharp pain at the back of my head, and I was in a very good physical condition.

Steven Yaple, of Fullerton, California, writes :

Since you mention an interest in altered states, it may be in order to say some things about my own psyche. During the period in which I first noticed the phenomenon, I tended to be very lonely and unhappy. A lot of times during my walks I would sense a great deal of energy, although I cannot say to what extent these feelings correlated with my experiences of the street lights going out. I often was able to hear humming coming from the power lines.

An anonymous sysop on the PSINET computer bulletin board (in the U.S.), [reported by Steven Yaple], observed :

I want to describe an occurrence that has gone on for about 9-12 months... For some reason, when I have driven under a specific street light at night, it will go out ! Now, this does not happen when I am 50 yards ahead or behind it but when I am exactly underneath it. I have a sunroof in my car, so when it goes out I can usually look up through the sunroof and see it going out. This has occurred about a dozen times in the past year. I never try to make it go out. About 50% of the time I am not thinking of anything specifically, and am somewhat upset the other 50% of the time. Recently I drove by a building that has three large square lights on the side of the building. All of a sudden, the last light went out just as I was driving by. I stopped and waited for it to come on, but it didn't. At that precise time I was getting angry about an incident that had occurred earlier in the day. Is it chance ? synchronicity ? or psychokinesis ?

However, **David Lang**, of Eugene, Oregon, has quite a different experience:

Mood, thoughts, emotions don't (yet) seem to correlate. I have zapped them mad, in love, lost in 'job' thoughts, daydreams, in cars, alone, with friends, on walks, late at night, early in the evening, on busy streets and on side streets.

State of health

Is it important what one's physical state is ? **George Egely** says so :
[SLI] has never happened when I was even a little bit sick.

Type of lamp

Syd Ellis mentions mercury vapor lamps and fluorescent lights.

George Egely writes :

In 1979 I moved to another place, but I kept on walking home and in that different district the same effects were repeated on mercury lamps, but never with tungsten lamps.

David Lang wonders :

One theory I am currently testing is that maybe I am not blasting the bulbs at all. Since I don't zap regular light bulbs or even house fluorescents, I began to wonder why just street lamps ? It occurred to me that the ones I zap are all on light-sensing switches and perhaps my energy at certain times for who knows what or why is the right kind and strength to trick the switch into thinking it is daytime. I haven't been able to test this because I've zapped no lights since coming up with this idea.

A sysop named **Ron Carter**, reported by Steven Yapple :

Street lights go out when I am near them, both passing in a car, and walking past them... usually with the new mercury vapor lamps... very recently it has spread to regular bulbs.

After-effects

Syd Ellis tells us :

SLI doesn't seem to cause me any after-effects one way or the other. When it first occurred, I was concerned because I didn't understand it - and still don't. Now I rather enjoy it !

SLI linked with other capabilities ?

It is much too soon to start speculating as to what kind of person is SLI-able, but one or two suggestive indications are reported.

Steven Yapple writes :

For what it's worth, I do often experience what would probably be termed precognition. I know SLI would involve a different type of psychic ability, but I want to point out that unusual experiences like SLI are not that unusual to myself.

There may be a synchronous aspect to this. Synchronicity has been a very powerful concept for me ; what I would call synchronous events occur quite frequently in my life. That street lights tend to go out when I am near them has become just another part of life. I do not know that I cause them to go out, only that I am often around when they do.

Syd Ellis :

Nothing like this happened to me when I was young, but I always noticed coincidences, always, from a child on up, causing me to finally write 'How many coincidences does it take to make a reality ?' in my early twenties. I believe I'm somehow connected to everything, and it causes lights to happen, or machines to stop when I walk by if I'm 'being a certain way' but it's in my head somehow.

David Lang :

There have been several times when I knew my computer was going to die and need repairs - just before it died and showed no outward symptoms : did I sense it or cause it ?

Also I have been known to occasionally fix broken things (usually electrical) by simply opening the case, looking inside, seeing that there was nothing I could do, closing it up and it works. (Jarred a loose wire ?)

Speaking for myself [HE] there is no doubt that some of my colleagues in the library where I work are 'machine-friendly' while others are the reverse : is this linked ? A lady came up to me after a lecture once and told me of her many SLI experiences, and also of many instances in which she had affected electrical equipment, for instance at supermarket check-outs the till would malfunction when she reached the head of the queue, after functioning perfectly for all the customers ahead of her.

I don't think there can be any question that for some, at least, SLI ability comes hand in hand with 'gifts' related to other types of equipment. Usually - perhaps always ? - these seem to be electrical.

But **Ron Carter**, the sysop reported above, relates SLI to a weirder ability :

The other thing which occurs often is the availability of parking spaces no matter where I go. This has been with me a long time, in Chicago and here. I get parking spaces on a regular basis, in the Loop in Chicago and in Larimer Sq. here, and a lot of times there is time on the meter, and the space is very close to my destination... what does this mean ? Is it precognition of a space ? Why can't it be a better skill, such as finding gold ?

There are some of us who would say that finding parking spaces is worth more than finding gold... Ron Carter's observations drew a reply from another participant in the bulletin board, **Rhonda Lee** :

I have the same eerie things happen, only my problem is electricity. Often, when I go in a 7-11 store, and if I get too close to the safe it will start popping out money : if I am out on a windy day I have found that the electricity builds up more and I eventually have to ground myself before I touch anything or anyone. I have crashed computer systems, I've shocked boyfriends while kissing them, and almost always I have problems with computers, digital electronics, copy machines, etc. It's been happening so long now I guess I am used to it.

Another reply came from **Ann Joplin** :

The same thing happens to me with the lights. I can go by certain lights on different nights and put them out. I would like to know an explanation of this...

Another thought which will inevitably occur to some is whether SLI is linked to so-called 'poltergeist' manifestations. Both seem to have in common that they involve mental control over physical events at a distance from the individual.

Harry Price, in **Poltergeist over England** [Country Life, 1945, p.335] refers to a case which may be relevant : it occurred in 1920, at Salisbury, Wiltshire :

...Another incident was the switching on, in the night, of every electrical appliance that the 'Poltergeist' could lay hands on. The occupier's wife was ill in bed and the only staff was a young nursemaid who looked after a child of three. The husband was first down in the morning and found the electric oven turned full on ; the electric iron, on its side, was burning a hole in a portable ironing table ; and a small electric cream-maker was going full blast. The appliances that were not plugged in (e.g. the vacuum cleaner, etc) had not been interfered with.

The maid, though she was found 'sleeping peacefully in her room with a look of innocence on her face that disarmed all suspicion', was discharged and, though he does not explicitly say so, Price presumably intends us to infer that the phenomena then ceased. Today we would want to know much more about the inter-personal dynamics of the household before being so sure that we had identified the agent : it might just as well have been the sick wife who was 'responsible', perhaps out of jealousy of the nursemaid.

Suggested explanations

It would be premature to attempt to make a synthesis of ideas as to what is going on, but that is no reason why we shouldn't note some of the ideas that people have put forward.

George Egely:

In my opinion during such incidents some special, not presently known type of magnetic field is created around the body, which has an effect upon the structure of the materials. Consequently their fundamental properties are changed temporarily : like their tensile stress, electric conductivity, magnetic momentum, optical properties, etc. The same effects are detected in the case of 'metal bending' or similar features are observed sometimes around ball lightning.

Steven Yapple draws our attention to one of the few references to SLI in the paranormal literature, in **ESP, Hauntings and Poltergeists** by Loyd Auerbach (1986, Warner Books, p.32) :

In June 1984, while I was on WNBC-Radio's "Edge of Reality" show in New York, a caller reported the odd situation of street lights going off as he walked by them. Interestingly enough, I received a similar call on my return to California a week and a half later. While the experience could have been paranormal, it was highly

probable that it was not. Almost certainly what was happening was that headlights of passing cars were being reflected into the photoelectric cells of the lamps (the electric eye that automatically turns streetlights on and off as the sun sets and rises).

A similar suggestion was made to Steven Yapple by **Jim Reeb**, a PSINET contributor, who added :

...the headlights need not shine on the sensor directly but can be reflected by an overhang etc. Now, if you're walking, that is another story (unless, of course, you are quite bald)

Steven Yapple doesn't tell us whether he still has his hair, but he comments :

In my case, I do not recall any passing cars in many of my experiences, unless we postulate that it was caused by 'invisible' passing cars... And of course, if it were caused by passing cars, why would it not occur more frequently ? The hypothesis could be tested, at least, to see if a passing car CAN cause a street light to go out. It would be best to try it on a street light that someone had recently had the SLI experience with.

I think we will all feel that Auerbach's explanation is inadequate : nevertheless, it is important we take note of every suggestion, if only because, in evaluating it, we may be able to eliminate some factor - as, in this case, passing cars.

Dennis Stillings, of the Archaeus Project in St Paul, has some practical suggestions for us :

Have you talked to people who manufacture and repair street lamps to find out what some of the idiosyncrasies of street lamps might be ? Would they respond in any way to changes in fields or capacitance due to the nearness of a large body such as a person or car ? There are, I believe, street lights of a certain design that respond to light changes. They may fluctuate on and off easily depending on prevailing and transient light conditions. I suspect that they are most sensitive at twilight. I ask these things based on experience. There are some bridge lights around Minneapolis that seem to behave in just this manner. I was at first startled by the way lights seemed to go off and on as I approached and passed by, but then I noticed that the lights went off and on at the approach and departure of other vehicles. This, at least, relieved me of personal psychokinetic responsibility. These effects will certainly be the source of several spurious reports.

Indeed, I [HE] have a malfunctioning streetlamp which I pass as I walk (before sun-up, in winter) to work ; it often goes out as I approach it - and for a day or two I wondered if I, normally as psychic as a plank, had at last found my psychic metier - but then I discovered that it was totally arbitrary in its offgoings and oncomings.

What would seem to be a distinguishing characteristic of the truly anomalous SLI phenomenon is that the lights, once out, stay out for the rest of that night, only to come on again next night. But is this sufficiently the rule that we can make it a yardstick whereby to distinguish truly anomalous SLI from a spurious effect ? I shall be surprised if it's that simple, but let's work on it...

* * * * *

Even from this haphazard collection of observations and comments, some interesting lines of inquiry arise, and I hope they will stimulate SLIDE readers to add further notes and suggestions.

In June 1990 there will be a conference at Budapest, specifically on ball lightning, but where there will also be discussion of related phenomena : since one of the conveners of the conference is Dr Egely, whose SLI testimony is quoted earlier, it is likely that SLI will come up for discussion in the course of the proceedings, in which case it will be reported on in another issue of SLIDINGS.

For the moment, thanks to those whose contributions have supplied the material for this first SLIDINGS : their addresses are appended below in case anyone wishes to contact them direct.

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